


MEMORANDUM

TO: The Honorable JB Pritzker, Governor
The Honorable Emanuel “Chris” Welch, Speaker of the House
The Honorable Tony McCombie, House Minority Leader
The Honorable Don Harmon, Senate President
The Honorable John Curran, Senate Minority Leader

FROM: Dr. Tony Sanders 
State Superintendent of Education

DATE: December 17, 2024

SUBJECT: HJR0057 Report

The Illinois State Board of Education respectfully submits the summary of findings related to House Joint Resolution 0057, which directs “the Professional Review Panel and the Illinois State Board of Education to conduct the analysis and financial modeling required to evaluate the implications of implementing the recommended \$22 minimum hourly rate for employees providing educational support services.”

This report is transmitted on behalf of the State Superintendent of Education. For additional information, please contact Dana Stoerger, Executive Director, Legislative Affairs at (217) 782-6510 or dstoerge@isbe.net.

cc: Secretary of the Senate
Clerk of the House
Legislative Research Unit
State Government Report Center

Executive Summary

This report is provided in response to House Joint Resolution 0057, which directs “the Professional Review Panel and the Illinois State Board of Education to conduct the analysis and financial modeling required to evaluate the implications of implementing the recommended \$22 minimum hourly rate for employees providing educational support services.” Estimates about the effect of the proposed support staff wage increases on support staff salaries are included in this report. This report uses employment data reported by districts from school year 2022-23 to provide these estimates.¹ This report estimates that salaries for paraprofessionals and noncertified staff in public districts in Illinois will increase by a minimum of \$117 million in SY 2025-26 if the minimum salary for paraprofessionals and noncertified staff is raised to \$20 an hour and a minimum of \$191 million by SY 2027-28 with the proposed \$22 an hour minimum rate. If reported unfilled positions also are filled, this value could rise to roughly \$228 million by SY 2027-28.

Introduction

This report presents data on the effect on district budgets of an hourly rate increase for paraprofessional and noncertified support staff.² Complete data is not available for all public districts. The analysis is structured in four sections, which correspond to four categories of districts based on the extent of employment data submitted to ISBE:

1. Data on both the full-time equivalence (FTE) and salary of noncertified staff as well as FTE and salary for paraprofessionals (232 districts).
2. Data on the FTE of noncertified staff as well as FTE and salary for paraprofessionals (309 districts).
3. Data on the FTE and salary of paraprofessionals (198 districts).
4. Data on the FTE and salary of noncertified staff (16 districts).

In total, these four estimates include projections for 755 public districts representing 1.7 million K-12 students.³ Table 1 documents the number of entities by category for which there is noncertified staff salary data, noncertified staff FTE totals, or paraprofessional data; however, the remainder of the report is focused on the estimated impact solely to public districts.⁴ The 755 public districts are those for which ISBE has full or partial 2023 data on paraprofessional or noncertified staff. The data is missing for the remaining 107 public districts.

¹ This data was reported in the Employment Information System (EIS) and corresponds to the 2023 Illinois Report Card, as well as in Noncertified Staff Salary Study that corresponds to the [2023 Noncertified Staff Salary Report](#).

² Information on the type of noncertified staff data collected by the [Noncertified Staff Salary Study](#) and the [Employment Information System](#) can be found in the documentation for those collections. No other types of noncertified staff are included in this analysis.

³ These districts are identified as Category 2 in the Entity Profile System. More information about entity categories and a list of entities by category can be found in the [Directory of Educational Entities](#).

⁴ This data matches the 2023 Illinois Report Card (paraprofessionals and noncertified staff FTE totals, enrollments, and the list of entities); the 2023 Noncertified Staff Salary Report (noncertified staff salaries for districts with enrollments greater than 1,000); and the [2024 Unfilled Positions Report](#).

Table 1. Summary of Available Data

Category ⁵	Number of Entities	Students (Home District)
ROE	18	0
Public Districts	755	1,715,399
Misc Payees	15	0
Spec Ed Districts/Cooperatives	50	0
Other State-Funded	2	1,045
Vocational Districts/Schools	7	0

Analysis Section 1: 232 Districts with Complete Data

The first part of the report’s estimation of the impact of support staff salary increases is based on the 232 districts for which there is complete data on noncertified staff salaries from the Noncertified Staff Salary Study, noncertified staff FTE from EIS, and paraprofessional salary and FTE from EIS. All data aside from the unfilled positions FTE for paraprofessionals is from the 2023 Report Card Snapshot; the unfilled FTE is from the 2024 Unfilled Positions Snapshot.⁶ These 232 public districts are the home district for approximately 840,000 K-12 students.

The following assumptions and constraints were used to produce this analysis:

- Assume that no salaries will decrease as a result of the increased hourly wages in school years 2025-26, 2026-27, and 2027-28.
- Assume that it is necessary to calculate the potential impact on district budgets only where the noncertified staff salary or paraprofessional salary data indicates that \$20, \$21, or \$22 hourly rates would represent an increase compared to 2023 salary data.
- Assume a 7.5-hour workday, and 183 contract days for these calculations.⁷
- Assume that paraprofessional and noncertified staff FTE will remain constant in these districts from 2023 to 2028.
- Assume that calculations must account for both partially and/or completely filling unfilled paraprofessional positions in the districts for each year.⁸

Calculations for these 232 districts are presented in the table on the next page. These estimates were reached by multiplying the projected wage increase for noncertified and paraprofessional staff by that staff’s FTE in the district and summing all district increases.

The most conservative estimate of the effect on district budgets -- accounting for no unfilled paraprofessional positions being filled -- shows that these 232 districts will need an additional

⁵ For more information about each type of entity, please see the [Entity Profile System Keys to Coding](#).

⁶ The Unfilled Positions Report uses 2023 filled positions and 2024 unfilled positions in its vacancy rate calculation, so this methodology is consistent with that existing report.

⁷ The average number of contract days for full-time paraprofessionals in 2023 was 183, according to district data. ISBE does not have information on the number of hours per week considered full time for noncertified staff, so ISBE applied the 37.5 hours per week that full-time Illinois public employees work in the calculation.

⁸ Note: There is no existing data on unfilled positions for noncertified staff.

\$65 million in SY 2025-26. If all unfilled positions are filled, the increase will be approximately \$86 million. By SY 2027-28, those estimates range from \$109 million to \$136 million. These results are shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Budget Effects for Districts with Paraprofessional and Noncertified Staff Salary Data

	2026 Budget effect	2027 Budget effect	2028 Budget effect
No unfilled positions filled	\$64,638,747	\$85,795,456	\$109,047,571
Half of unfilled positions filled	\$75,228,819	\$98,316,382	\$122,338,353
All unfilled positions filled	\$85,819,084	\$110,837,510	\$135,629,347

Analysis Section 2: 309 Districts with Noncertified Staff FTE and Paraprofessional Data

The second part of this analysis, shown in Table 3, includes districts for which there exists paraprofessional FTE and salary data as well as noncertified staff FTE data, but not noncertified staff salary data (as only districts with more than 1,000 students are eligible and required to participate in the Noncertified Staff Salary Study per [statute](#)). The average paraprofessional salary was 75% of the average lowest noncertified staff salary, according to the 232 districts in the first part of this analysis. (See Table 2.) This section assumes that this salary ratio holds for other districts as well. Using this **estimated** (average paraprofessional salary in that district divided by .75) noncertified staff salary, the projected effects on public districts relative to 2023 salaries is in Table 3. These 309 districts account for 208,850 K-12 students.

Table 3. Budget Effects for Districts with Paraprofessional Salary Data and Estimated Noncertified Staff Salaries

	2026 Budget effect	2027 Budget effect	2028 Budget effect
No unfilled positions filled	\$29,410,928	\$37,146,711	\$45,390,745
Half of unfilled positions filled	\$31,078,516	\$39,027,379	\$47,394,184
All unfilled positions filled	\$32,746,076	\$40,908,018	\$49,397,592

Analysis Section 3: 198 Districts with only Paraprofessional Data

The third part of this analysis includes entities for which ISBE has paraprofessional salary and FTE data, but no data on noncertified staff FTE or salaries. The missing data means that the estimates for these districts are incomplete. These 198 public districts are the home district for 600,386 students. These results are shown in Table 4.

Table 4. Budget Effects for Districts with Paraprofessional Data Only

	2026 Budget effect	2027 Budget effect	2028 Budget effect
No unfilled positions filled	\$21,574,718	\$27,326,330	\$33,986,330
Half of unfilled positions filled	\$24,134,430	\$30,143,729	\$37,209,646
All unfilled positions filled	\$26,694,115	\$32,961,100	\$40,432,933

Analysis Section 4: 16 Districts with Noncertified Staff Data Only

The fourth set of districts are those for which ISBE has noncertified staff FTE totals and salary data, but no data on paraprofessionals. This does not necessarily mean that there are no paraprofessionals in these 16 districts — they may contract with another entity to provide paraprofessionals and not employ them directly (and, as such, would not report them in EIS since those paraprofessionals are not employees). These districts also may not have reported their paraprofessional salary data at the time of the 2023 Report Card Snapshot. The 16 districts summarized in Table 5 are the home districts for 64,765 students. These estimates, like the ones for districts reported in Table 4, are incomplete due to missing data. Unfilled positions are not reported for noncertified staff, so these estimates do not account for filling any unfilled positions in future years.

Table 5. Estimated Budget Effects for District with Noncertified Staff Data Only

	2026 Budget effect	2027 Budget effect	2028 Budget effect
No unfilled positions filled	\$1,107,340	\$1,572,411	\$2,172,642

Missing Data and Its Importance for These Projections

The projected budget effects in this summary are likely underestimates of the true budgetary effect of raising support staff hourly wages in Illinois for several reasons.

1. As mentioned previously, not all districts report employing paraprofessionals. This may be due to them contracting out those positions (and properly not reporting those contractors in EIS) or to incomplete data collection. Pay for these contracted employees will likely increase as well, but ISBE does not have data on contracted paraprofessionals so those budget effects cannot be estimated. One hundred and twenty-two districts did not report any paraprofessional FTE in SY 2022-23.
2. This summary shows the results for public districts only. Other publicly funded entities, such as Regional Offices of Education (ROEs), employ noncertified staff and paraprofessionals as well but are not mandated to report the same data that public districts are. Eighteen ROEs reported 78 FTE for paraprofessionals in SY 2022-23, but it is not known if other ROEs employ paraprofessionals. Special education districts/cooperatives employed 2,713 FTE paraprofessionals in SY 2022-23; this report did not estimate the effect of HJR 0057 on those entities.

3. Noncertified staff who are contracted to work in a district but not employed directly by the district may not be included in the noncertified staff FTE totals reported by public districts. Their pay may be affected by the proposed wage increase; thus, the contracted rates districts pay could increase as well. Nineteen ROEs reported noncertified staff FTE totals in SY 2022-23 and 44 special education districts/cooperatives reported noncertified staff FTEs, but it is not known how much noncertified staff in those entities are paid and the effect of a wage increase for those entities cannot be estimated.
4. Two hundred and thirty-four districts with home-district enrollment did not report noncertified FTE totals in SY 2022-23. ISBE does not know how many noncertified staff work in or are contractors in those districts, so it is not possible to estimate any potential pay increases.

Conclusion

In summary, this report estimates that salaries for paraprofessionals and noncertified staff for Category 2 districts in Illinois for which ISBE has full or partial data will increase by a minimum of approximately \$117 million in SY 2025-26 if the minimum salary for paraprofessionals and noncertified staff is raised to \$20 an hour, and \$191 million by SY 2027-28 assuming that the filled FTE of paraprofessionals and noncertified staff remains at SY 2022-23 levels and no unfilled positions from SY 2023-24 are filled.

An increase in the minimum wage of support staff will have an impact on district resources. ISBE expects that some districts, particularly those with lower wages, will be impacted more than others. Given that actual wages paid by districts for these positions will have no direct impact on Evidence-Based Funding (EBF) salary cost factors, the cost to increase wages will need to be realized through funding means other than EBF.

The scope of this report is limited to examining the direct impact of wage changes to support staff at the state level. Future studies will be required to examine the impact among different EBF tiers as well as the impact at the district level. Further, the extent of these budget effects will be shaped by who among certified and noncertified district employees is included in the definition of “educational support staff.” Additional work is also needed to examine how changes among support staff could impact teacher salaries, salaries for other certified staff, salaries for contractors who work in districts, and other indirect effects. Knowing the larger impact on individual districts will help determine where additional resources may be needed and help promote equity if this policy is enacted.

Table 6. Estimated Budget Effects for All 755 Public Districts in Sample

	2026 Budget effect	2027 Budget effect	2028 Budget effect
No unfilled positions filled	\$ 116,731,733	\$ 151,840,907	\$ 190,597,288

Half of unfilled positions filled	\$ 131,549,105	\$ 169,059,901	\$ 209,114,825
All unfilled positions filled	\$ 146,366,615	\$ 186,279,039	\$ 227,632,513

Table 6 combines Tables 2, 3, 4, and 5 in order to create a statewide estimate.